

A Heart of Wisdom
Proverbs 4:20-27
Ben Wikner
Sunday, August 16, 2009

Main Idea: By knowing our heart and guarding in appropriately, we position ourselves to grow in wisdom and godliness.

Key Points:

1. **Why is the heart so important? Because, the heart is the control center of life.**
 - a. From the heart flow the wellsprings of life. Whatever flows out of us, either words or actions, is colored and constituted by our heart. Our words and actions are a reflection – they reveal the substance – of our hearts.
 - b. Circumstances are important but not determinative. Circumstances don't cause us to sin; they only reveal the sin that is already in our heart.
 - c. Because of the heart's centrality, we are urged to guard our hearts with all diligence. Or as some translations have it, "Above all else, guard your hearts." In order to be wise, there is nothing more vital for our well being than that we guard our heart. So then, "why the need to guard?" There are 4 reasons we guard anything.
 - i. It's valuable
 - ii. Its fragile
 - iii. Its powerful
 - iv. Its criminal
 - d. We guard our hearts because they are criminal, i.e they are deceptive (see Jer. 17:9)
2. **How do we influence the heart? - The eyes and ears feed the heart.**
 - a. Guarding our hearts means we give due attention to what our eyes see and what our ears listen to. From Washington to Hollywood, from our Ipods and facebook to books, magazines, TV, movies, co-workers, and the internet, so much folly is available to flow into our hearts from our eyes and ears.
3. **What does a healthy heart look like? - A healthy heart results in a godly.**
 - a. Verse 24 - With our mouth we are speaking the truth: honesty and sincerity. This is no small thing. We are tempted to lie all the time: whether it be how we really feel about somebody or inflating some details in an effort to look better.
 - b. Verse 25 - With our eyes, we are looking straight ahead, towards the prize of our upward calling. There are so many distractions: the immodest woman, the get rich quick scheme, the perfectly legitimate but overly demanding youth sports programs, those seemingly innocent but frivolous leisure activities.

- c. Verse 26 - With our minds we are exercising care and discernment so as not to step in a snare or ditch. This means we are asking questions, getting counsel, weighing options, and deliberating in prayer.
- d. Verse 27 - With our feet we are walking on the straight and narrow path, the path that ultimately leads to heaven.

Fellowship Starters

1. Ben taught us that circumstances don't cause sin, they simply reveal the sin already resident in our hearts. What has your present circumstances been revealing about the sin in your heart?
2. Since our hearts are deceptive (Jer. 17:9), where is your heart deceiving you to ignore the concerns or warnings of conscience, your spouse or your friends?
3. Ben taught us that "the eyes and ears feed the heart". In the last 6 months, what has been the diet of your eyes and ears (e.g., TV, movies, radio, music, books, friends, etc)? To grow in wisdom and godliness, what changes should you make to guard your heart?
4. To guard our hearts and grow in wisdom, God's word needs to permeate every aspect of our lives. Is this how God's word functions in your life? How can you grow in making God's word pervasive?
5. Sin is not the final answer. The final answer is the grace of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. How does the gospel fill you with hope and faith even as the Holy Spirit enables you to put to death remaining sin in your heart?